The Soviet H-Bomb: Total Destruction and Total Diplomacy, See Page 2

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Co-Existence or *Non*-Existence

Publicly the line in Washington is to treat Malenkov's announcement of a Soviet H-bomb with skepticism. The word passed out is to laugh it off. Privately, however, there is no disposition to assume that Malenkov was bluffing. When Molotov in 1947 said the "secret" of the atom bomb had "long ceased to exist", the Atomic Energy Commission called this a misleading statement for home consumption. This time the Commission's reaction is sober. Malenkov's wording is important. Molotov in 1947 spoke only of the atom bomb's "secret". Malenkov now says, "the U. S. has no monopoly in the production of the hydrogen bomb either." Note the word "production".

It is not impossible that the U. S. S. R. may have beaten the U. S. in the race for the H-bomb. Truman directed work on the H-bomb in January, 1950. But at least four years earlier, the Austrian physicist, Hans Thirring, with no access to secret information, American or Russian, devoted a chapter to describing the theory and mechanism of the hydrogen bomb in his book, "Die geschichte der atombombe" (Vienna, 1946).

It would be naive to suppose that the Russian government had to wait for this book to appear before it was aware of the H-bomb. Fuchs is said to have learned of it when he was in Los Alamos from 1944 to 1946. The Russians may well have tackled the problems of the atom bomb and the H-bomb at the same time. If Malenkov spoke truthfully, the Soviets are already producing the hydrogen bomb. Whether we have produced it yet is not known. The well-informed *Washington Post,* which follows atomic developments closely, speaks of the "thermonuclear device" exploded in the Pacific last year as "the forerunner of the hydrogen bomb." Since U. S. military-diplomatic policy has been based on the hope of frightening the Russians into submission, the production and test of an American H-bomb would probably be well advertised.

Unlike the Pentagon, the Kremlin did not use its announcement as an occasion for threats or bluster. Malenkov followed his news about the H-bomb with another plea for peaceful co-existence of the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. "It would be a crime before mankind," he said, "if the certain relaxation which has appeared in the international atmosphere should be replaced by a new intensification of the tension." Unfortunately the news must lead to greater tension unless it is seized upon as a means of breaking the ice of the cold war and initiating top level talks for a settlement.

If Churchill is well enough, the Russian announcement may give him the leverage he needs for another try at negotiations. The public is so punch-drunk on large numbers and mass destruction that one despairs of awakening some realization of what H-bomb warfare would mean. Thirring wrote, "God protect the country over which a six-ton bomb of lithium hydride will ever explode." In the April, 1950, issue of *Scientific American,* Dr. Hans A. Bethe, who was chief of the theoretical physics laboratory at Los Alamos, warned "By the blast effect alone a single bomb could obliterate almost all of Greater New York or Moscow or London." In the July, 1953 issue of *Foreign Affairs,* J. Robert Oppenheimer explained, "We may anticipate a state of affairs in which two Great Powers will each be in a position to put an end to the civilization and life of the other . . . We may be likened to two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other, but only at the risk of his own life."

Though the words may sound like a soap slogan, it is literally true that whether the Russians or ourselves have the H-bomb now or will have it tomorrow, the issue simply and literally for millions of us on this planet is a choice between co-existence or non-existence. There is no safety in an arms race, especially an H-bomb race. "Suppose," Harold C. Urey writes, "that two countries have the hydrogen bomb. Is it not believable that sooner or later an incident may occur which would precipitate the use of bombs? . . . The probability that a war will start is increased if two groups each believe they can win that war. . . . An exact balance of power is very difficult to attain. This is what we know in physical science as a situation of unstable equilibrium; one like balancing an egg on its end. The slightest push topples the egg in one direction or another."

Gordon Dean, in his final press conference here on June 25 when retiring as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, tried to get across some of the suicidal potentialities in the present situation. "We have said many times," he declared, "that we are ahead of the Russians, but that is not enough. It does us no good to reach the point where we would be able to wipe out an enemy 20 times over if he reaches the point where he can wipe us out just once." The statement provoked these alarmingly cryptic questions and answers:

> **"The PRESS: . . . You are not suggesting that the Russians have reached the point where they can wipe us out ?**
>
> **"Mr. DEAN: I am not suggesting because I can't answer the thing I would like to see publicly discussed. Today I can't.**
>
> **"The PRESS: You are not saying they can or they can't?**
>
> **"Mr. DEAN: I am not saying they can or they can't. . . .**
>
> **"The PRESS: Mr. Dean, do you think the public's attitude toward defense would change if they knew these various things about the Russian's atomic bombs?**
>
> **"Mr. DEAN: Yes, I think they would be much more sober about what the real danger may be in the next few years."**

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Total Diplomacy and Total Destruction

The Russian H-bomb announcement is important because it may open a door the Truman Administration kept tightly shut against public discussion of the super-weapon. The H-bomb is a striking example of the way atomic secrecy has served to ensure control of national policy by a handful of military and political leaders.

In an age which boasts of world wide communications, the Truman Administration was able to keep the H-bomb a secret in this country though its theory had been fully discussed in a book published in Vienna after the war. It was only when a Senator indiscreetly mentioned the super bomb on the air in the Fall of 1949 that it became known to the American public.

The remarks of Senator Johnson of Colorado opened a promising debate in foreign policy. David Lilienthal appealed to Truman to negotiate with Moscow before embarking on an H-bomb race. The late Senator Mc Mahon and Senator Tydings began a campaign for disarmament, co-existence and a 50-year program for world development. Discussion was cut short (1) by Truman's decision in January, 1950, to proceed with production of the bomb, (2) by Acheson's campaign for "total diplomacy," and (3) by Mc Carthy's debut on the national scene with a sensational attack on the State Department in February, 1950. This diverted the energies of Tydings and Mc Mahon and distracted attention from the H-bomb.

Recently there have been overtures by Gordon Dean and Robert J. Oppenheimer for a reopening of public discussion. The drive for private control of the atom has had the good effect of stimulating a campaign for greater release of information to the public. Unless the grip of secrecy is loosened, the industry can hardly be handed over to private ownership. The White House has shown its sympathy. There has been pressure from scientists and others concerned with civil defense and worried by public indifference.

A major obstacle to the release of more information is that public knowledge of the danger would make impossible the maintenance of that rigid foreign policy which Acheson called "total diplomacy." It is total in the sense that it demands total acquiescence at home in a policy of totally avoiding any negotiations which might relax tension.

There is unfortunately no sign that the present Administration is prepared to abandon total diplomacy. Though the resistance in Congress to any increase in the debt ceiling showed the strength of business forces which want economy in government, the same men often demand lower taxes at home and more costly commitments abroad. The truce in Korea is regarded by Dulles and the Pentagon merely as an occasion for returning to the policy of the arms race and more bases. The strategy is to "sit tight" in Korea, walking out of the political conference after 90 days to avoid withdrawal of American troops and the political headaches of unification.

The "sit tight" strategy was made clear by Dulles at his last press conference before leaving for Korea. When asked what hope he had for the unification of Korea without making "undue concessions" to Red China, the Secretary replied, "I have not only the hope, but I have the faith and belief that it is possible to detach satellite areas . . . I think some of the things that are going on in the satellite area of Europe —in the Soviet sector of Berlin and in the Soviet zone of Germany and Czechoslovakia—all indicate that there can be an attraction of these areas for the Western world so strong that it will not seem worthwhile for the Soviet masters to keep them under their rule." If North Korea and Eastern Germany can be "detached" by continuing the cold war, there is no need to negotiate for the unification of either country.

But centrifugal forces are set in motion on both sides by this kind of a policy. Capitalist Japan cannot afford to give up the China trade permanently. Adenauer—to Washington's dismay—has been talking of offering Moscow a "non-aggression" pact in return for a unified Germany. The burden of the arms race is reviving Popular Frontism in both Italy and France.

The most important political development in Italy has gone almost unnoticed in the American press. The right wing Socialist, Saragat, continues to urge that the Left wing Socialist, Nenni, be brought into the government, though Nenni is allied with the Communists. In France the general strike in which Socialist, Catholic and Communist unions joined forces was a portent. A "sit tight" policy can maintain the pump-priming benefits of rearmament here but the other non-Communist countries are too poor to stand the pace. Western Europe, if allowed freedom, will move further toward socialism. Its economic problems are insoluble under the kind of decadent capitalism to be seen in Italy and France.

The latest bulletin of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe shows severe crisis conditions in Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany, but it also shows a slowdown in West European economic growth. The figures indicate continued expansion elsewhere in the Soviet zone and there is no reason to believe that East Germans and Czechs cannot be held by force if necessary. "From the most skeptical studies" of Soviet economic statistics, says a writer in the July, 1953 *Foreign Affairs*, "the fact of a superior rate of growth does emerge." The article is called "The Soviet Economy Outpaces The West". It should be required reading for those who assume that a few riots in East Germany may shake the Soviet dictatorship.

Unless America's allies and our own German and Japanese satellites press hard for a settlement, the danger is that the Soviet H-bomb announcement will merely intensify total diplomacy and let it drift toward a war of total destruction. The American military may easily seize on the possibility of a Soviet H-bomb to exploit public panic for greater arms expenditures, and the swift development of a garrison state regime.

Now is the time to press for peace talks. H-bombs cannot be made in hall closets. The enormous plants required lend themselves to enforcement by inspection. As for international public ownership of atomic facilities, the U. S. Congress would be the first to balk if the Russians ever agreed to it. Above all solution depends not so much on any treaties or enforcement devices but on a different atmosphere. So busy are the spreaders of hate that one almost despairs of achieving it.

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I. F. Stone's Weekly

• *Editor and Publisher*, I. F. STONE

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COMMENT

Vacation

The Weekly is published 50 weeks a year. It will not be published the last two weeks in August. Our next issue will be that of September 5.

J. B. Matthews 20 Years Ago

A correspondent sends us this tid-bit from a book published in 1935 called *Partners in Plunder*.

"The social significance of the church in a business society cannot be gauged by the brave utterances of a few individual clergymen. . . . The moral codes of the church are pervaded with emphases that are wholly congenial to the defense of business practices and interests. . . . Frightening phrases are a specialty of the pulpit, phrases which, in the interests of an economy of scarcity, serve to frighten the impressionable away from collectivism. . . . The leadership of the present-day Church, at least in Protestant communions, is definitely committed to a philosophy of liberalism. . . . The liberal approach to social questions is eminently suited to the purposes of business reaction."

The book was by Matthews and Shallcross and the Matthews was J. B.

Voltaire as Well as Marx

Under cover of the fight against Communism, clerical forces are carrying on a struggle against liberalism and rationalism. Fordham University has a Russian Institute. One of its members, the Rev. Andrei Ourosoff, S.J., has been on a speaking tour of the United States and Canada. The full text of one of his lectures may be found inserted in the Congressional Record of August 4.

An excerpt will show that this Jesuit with the Russian name attacks the whole tradition of free thought and scientific inquiry. "The most evil side of Marxism, the materialist atheism," he tells his audiences, "was a heritage of the long and steady development taking place in the thinking and philosophies which had grown up through the centuries in the West."

Father Ourosoff declares "Marxism is the result of the thoughts of men like Voltaire, the French encyclopaedist, social dreamers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the German philosophers of the last century and many other so-called outstanding European thinkers."

Father Ourosoff is full of contempt for the West and its traditions. At one point he glorifies Communist virtues and in an unfavorable comparison says, "All these qualities have always been wanting in the West because there is no faith." Apparently faith in freedom, faith in reason, faith in scientific inquiry, faith in the common man and faith in truth—the great faiths of the Western tradition—count for nothing.

How-Crazy-Can-You-Get Dept.

We noticed with pleased surprise that the day Congress adjourned, Jenner (R. Ind.) made a speech on the Senate floor in which he welcomed the truce in Korea and said, "every legitimate goal which can be achieved by war can be achieved better by diplomacy."

We were startled, however, to see just what Jenner expects diplomacy to accomplish. He thinks "all American policy must start from a firm decision to reestablish the legitimate anti-Communist government on the China mainland" with an army, navy and air force well enough equipped "to open a second front on the mainland of Asia." He wants Korea "unified to the Yalu," with armed forces "equipped to hold their share of the line against Russia's advance in Asia." He also proposes "a Japan fully armed and equipped to hold its share of the line," and "a united Germany, able to defend its share of the line in the West."

Suppose that the Russians do not fall in with this kind of diplomacy? "We will move to expel Russia from the UN," Jenner said. If the UN does not agree? "We will interpret a vote against us, or a refusal to vote, as a vote for our withdrawal from the UN."

While preparing to muster Nationalist Chinese, Koreans, Japanese and Germans in martial array, Jenner made it clear that he wanted no more Koreas.

"We want no American forces sent to Southeast Asia," he told the Senate, "to finish the Korean war under new and more terrible conditions. We want no carefully contrived emergencies by which we shall be forced to consent in haste to the sending of troops to Vietnam or Thailand."

(We hope the Senator was not thinking of our new Ambassador to Thailand—General William J. Donovan of the OSS when he spoke of contrived emergencies in that area).

This did not end the toll of what Jenner expects "diplomacy" to accomplish. While clearing China and North Korea of Communists and rearming the Germans and Japanese, Jenner wants the budget balanced and taxes cut.

Exit "Free Enterprise"

Air transport is now big business. In terms of passenger revenues last year, the country's biggest common carrier was American Airlines, which ranked ahead of our largest railroad, the Pennsylvania.

Since the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938, the volume of air travel has increased twenty-fold. Yet the Senate Select Committee on Small Business discloses that in this period the Civil Aeronautics Board has refused to certify a single new air carrier on the trunk routes. The number of companies permitted to operate has actually declined "from 18 when the act was under consideration to a probable 12 by the end of 1953."

The report made public by Senator Thye (R. Minn.), chairman of the committee, says air transport was "an infant industry" when Congress gave the CAB "the right to protect the then existing companies from competition until such time as they became strong" but did not intend "to bar all future entry into air transportation." The report reveals the monopoly conditions regulation has fostered and protests the CAB's hostility to the so-called "non-sked" airlines, which pioneered low cost air coach travel.

The Senate Small Business Committee report said the issue "involves the right of entry of new businesses into an industry. Freedom of opportunity has always been a basic American economic doctrine." The press which usually rises to cheer these cliches was remarkably silent about this report. When regulations serves to buttress monopoly, little is said about "free enterprise."

New Low in Deportation Drive

Hardly a day passes without a press release from the Department of Justice announcing that another deportation action has been begun against some radical, past or present. In last week's batch was the news that Attorney General Brownell had directed the filing of a petition to cancel the naturalization of Sophie Gerson, Brooklyn, N. Y. This is the story behind the news release.

Sophie Gerson is the wife of Simon W. Gerson, one of two Communists acquitted by Federal Judge Edward J. Dimock last September in New York's second Smith Act trial. Gerson, State legislative director of the Communist party, thereupon went on a speaking tour in defense of his fellow defendants. The acquittal and the tour did not add to his popularity in certain government circles.

The first hint of unpleasantness was a note in Howard Rushmore's weekly column for the New York *Journal-American*, saying that Gerson would soon have something to talk about, when someone close to him was deported.

Mrs. Gerson was born in Russia and came to this country at the age of 12. She has two children—a boy, 14, and a girl, 7. She was naturalized in 1945, with a group of women whose husbands were in the armed forces. Gerson was then an infantryman with the U. S. Army.

The Department press release says she was arrested in 1928 in New York, in 1929 at Gastonia, North Carolina, and in 1931 at Paterson, N. J. She was a labor organizer and these were strike arrests. The most "famous" of these strikes, according to the Department of Justice, was the "Gastonia mill strike of 1929". There were no convictions. Now this record of more than two decades ago is being raked up. This is one way to even scores with an accused man after a Judge directs a verdict of acquittal.

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JENNINGS PERRY'S PAGE

UN Should Assert Korean Truce as a Triumph

If in his slab-sided glass palace on the East River Dag Hammarskjold still has about him any part of the gift of poetry he reputedly had in the spruce forests of Sweden, he should give, about now, with a brave, prideful ballad on how the UN did so triumph in Korea. How it did repel the aggression, as it contracted to do. How it did stop the fight in the middle. I think he should pull out all the stops and claim the accomplishment, give voice and dignity to the exultation to which the people everywhere are inclined—and are entitled—and pose this hurrah as an antidote to the dyspeptic lament of the joy-killers among us who dreamed only of a victory dictated by MacArthur, in Moscow.

Why wait for History to unscramble the facts? There is room and need right away for a bright paean in celebration of the cease-fire, of the painfully-achieved substitution of brains for bullets in one argument. The disgruntled "experts" have spokesmen enough. From its plush easy chair the Saturday Evening Post sourly pontificates that "Korea is no triumph, either for UN or U. S." and goes on to despise the "international kibitzer" (the UN) permitted to stand behind this country's chair "and veto the obvious plays." Groans the plush easy chair, "MacArthur had his ears pinned back for naively attempting to win the Korean war, which he, with Stratemeyer and Van Fleet, insists could have been done." At the Pentagon lately, Gen. Mark Clark has darkly hinted that we may yet have to unlimber the atom bomb to do this job up brown. Back in March, predicting the rising of the General's star, Newsweek glowingly noted his ability "to keep his lip buttoned at the right time." Now Gen. Clark, briefing us on what we must be ready to do if the truce is broken, and suggesting that it already may have been sufficiently broken by the other side's failure to return to us as many men as we have listed as missing, further unbuttons to warn us that nothing is to be gotten from these people, really, save by force.

Our UN poet does not have to be nasty about it. His verse has better to do than to recall that the naive attempt to win in Korea by the precious formula of force brought a million Chinese swarming over the Yalu and got us pinned back to the Pusan perimeter with great losses, and almost into the sea. It should be enough in proper stanazs to point out that any morning since the shooting stopped, while unhappy editors have not left their comfortable couches, divers young men in uniform live to see the sun who would have been "missing" or torn or dead had there not been at last some sort of triumph of mind over MacArthur.

With a little imagery and emphasis a spokesman for the UN should be able to make it clear that, Gen. Clark's forebodings to the contrary nothwithstanding, keeping the atom bomb on the ground will be the finest service the UN can render mankind, just as up to now the fairest justification of its existence that can be chalked up is the part it has had to play in separating the fighting forces in Korea even by two miles. A couplet could be turned, and would be welcomed, on the theme that only those who only respect force themselves monotonously insist that others can understand nothing else.

It is not good for the UN nor for the hopes humanity has in it for those who disparage the truce in Korea, who are incapable of conceiving that the breaking off of a war in full career is incomparably a stouter proof of human rationality than any "final" arbitrament by force and who hasten to assume that the truce must end in a reversion to arms to go unchallenged. To the incontinent fuming of such skeptics, bully boys and second guessers the UN ought vigorously to oppose its own pride and purpose.

Who can guarantee that the truce can be nursed into a glorious peace, or even that peace can be glorious? But who on the other hand can convince this generation that the wagering of untold thousands of lives on the throw of the A-bomb in an effort to prove that what was naively attempted by MacArthur still can be done would not be an act in contempt of sense and of existence? The world has got this reprieve in Korea and should be impressed by it. The UN should vaunt it. And if Dag Hammarskjold can't make that rhyme and sing and excite, then the quiet forests of Sweden have been of no help to us and he is no bard.

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